

Church, which worldly interests had made him to leave.

The details of the sad drama are found in an authentic deposition, a copy of which is still preserved in the Vatican Library. Other copies were sent to various personages of the Empire. The learned Sedulius, during a sojourn he made at Friburg, in Brisgau, Baden, found there the authentic document, studied carefully every word of it, and its value as a historic document and finding it to be authentic, he published it at Antwerp in 1606, in his "*Præscriptiones*," calling it the "declaration of the domestic servant of Luther," heading it by the following title: "A sincere and truthful confession of a servant man of Martin Luther, to a pious individual, who had asked him in the name of religion, how his master Martin had died." The document is written in Latin, the following is the correct translation in English:

"I must say that your religious considerations and your entreaties give me courage to brave the indignation of men, as well as the fear of offending them, and give testimony to the truth. I am, however, more determined to do what I think my duty, by the respect I owe to God Almighty and to all His saints. For I well know that the marvelous works of God must be rendered glorious, and that I must obey the Divine law rather than human commands. For this reason, despite the terrible threats of the nobles of Germany, who want to prevent me from ever revealing to anyone whomsoever the fearful death of my master, Martin Luther, I shall not keep the truth captive in my mind; but for the glory of Jesus Christ, and the edification of the whole Christian world, I do now publish what I have witnessed with my own eyes; what I do know better than anyone else can pretend to know, and what I have related to the Nobles of Eisleben; and I do so not through

hatred of anyone, nor the desire to gain approbation, good favors, or grace with anybody whatsoever.

The following is what has happened: "Martin Luther, being at Eisleben with several nobles of Germany, allowed himself to be overcome by his habitual intemperance, and drank with so much excess that we were obliged to carry him off, absolutely helpless with drink, and to put him to bed."

Here we may interrupt the narrative and remark that it was publicly known everywhere that Martin Luther drank to excess. Five German quarts of wine (about an English Imperial gallon) were scarcely enough for him for each meal. He used to boast "of eating like a Bohemian and drinking like a Dutchman." "To be put on a low diet," he used to say, "is to live miserably. Let us eat and drink,—*last uns fressen und saufen*," (which applies to beasts only) "as much as possible, and give thanks to God (!) for His good things. Others would devour them for us." In consequence he would suffer from suffocations and indigestion of sundry kinds, but all this he said was "the devil's doing, who wanted to prevent him doing the holy work of God." No doubt the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ needing "paring down" or reformation to bring it to the level of this lewd, unchaste and gluttonous apostate. But his servant continues:

"Having wished him a good night, we retired to our own rooms and went to bed, never fearing or dreaming of anything to go wrong. Next morning we went back to our master as usual to help to get up and dress. On entering his room—oh! shocking to relate!—our said Master Martin was hanging from his bed, and miserably strangled!

"At this ghastly sight we were horribly frightened. And without delay we ran to the noble Princes, his guests of the night before, and an-